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SUBJECT: June 9 Darfuri Asylum Seekers: Ambassador's Meeting with
Ghana Refugee Board Chair

Ref: Accra 477

¶1. (SBU) On June 9, the Ambassador met with Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) Chair Emmanuel Bentil Owusu, GRB Secretary Mummuni Abdulai Bawumia, UNHCR Accra Representative Aida Haile Mariam, UNHCR Protection Officer Paulette Dadey, and UNHCR Durable Solutions Officer Senai Terrefe to discuss the situation of a group of twelve Darfuri asylum seekers, some of whose claims had been rejected by the GRB on February 28, 2008. The Ambassador noted the USG concern regarding the humanitarian crisis in Darfur and interest in ensuring that Darfuri refugees receive appropriate protection in the countries of asylum.

¶2. (SBU) The GRB discussed concerns about Sudanese asylum seekers in general, including the 480 Darfuri refugees in the Krisan Refugee Settlement. The GRB expressed their belief that Darfuri are coming to seek resettlement, that some Chadians are posing as Sudanese, and that traffickers have been involved in assisting Sudanese enter Ghana. The GRB did not have any information that these twelve had fraudulent identities or false persecution claims, but believed their transit through other countries without requesting asylum indicated they did not need international protection. The GRB noted that rejected asylum seekers are not required to leave Ghana; therefore rejection should not be a concern. They also noted the refugees have filed appeals and anticipates the Minister of the Interior will make a determination on the appeals within the next couple weeks. Regarding the asylum seekers' welfare, the GRB noted that they have listed mosques as their point of contact and residence. The GRB indicated that the twelve are receiving medical and education assistance and skills training. UNHCR Representative Mariam added her plea that Ghana would continue its gracious policy of positively reviewing legitimate claims for asylum and not let misrepresentation by some asylum seekers unduly influence this process.

BRIDGEWATER